

# CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by  
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE  
Sigtuna, Sweden

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No. 37

April 26th, 1958.

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## Declining Answer From President Horvath to the Northern Bishops.

In a letter dated March 25th, 1958, the President of the Hungarian Government's Office for Church Affairs, Mr. Janos Horvath has replied to the communication from the leading Northern Bishops of February 21st (see CN No. 36). The President's reply reads as follows:

"In your letter of February 21st you refer once more to the situation of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary. However, I am sorry to note from your letter that you are not acquainted with the laws of the Hungarian Evangelical-Lutheran Church as adopted by the various synods, nor with the present laws of the Hungarian People's Republic. Ignorance of these laws bring you to false conclusions and assumptions.

I also note - and your previous communication as well as the last one bear witness to this fact - that you do not have any intimate knowledge, either, of the present problems or of the situation in general. I believe that this, too, is misleading to you. Unfortunately my engagements do not permit me to inform you in detail about the ecclesiastical and political laws nor of the present problems and all the circumstances relating to them.

I believe - the more so as there seems to be every indication in this direction - that the Hungarian Lutherans, laymen, ministers and bishops, will be able to solve their problems in conformity with the interests of their Church without any 'help' from outside. The 'foreign help' so far extended has only served to create confusion; - the unconfirmed and often rather brutal news given by the Lutheran World Federation in the press and on the radio have only revealed the existing pressure and the Western propaganda. As to the value of this I have already expressed my opinion in my earlier letter. But I may now add this much that the prestige and popularity of the Lutheran World Federation has not gained by it - on the contrary!"

## Joint Declaration by the Evangelical Alliances in the Northern Countries.

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In a letter dated March 25th, 1955, the President of the Hungarian Government's Office for Church Affairs, Mr. János Horváth has replied to the communication from the leading Northern Bishops of February 21st (see CN No. 35). The President's reply reads as follows:

"In your letter of February 21st you refer once and for all to the situation of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary. However, I am sorry to note from your letter that you are not acquainted with the laws of the Hungarian Evangelical-Lutheran Church as adopted by the various synods, nor with the present laws of the Hungarian People's Republic. Ignorance of these laws brings you to false conclusions and assumptions.

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I believe - the more so as there seems to be every indication in this direction - that the Hungarian Lutheran, Baptist, and other churches will be able to solve their problems in conformity with the interests of their Church without any help from outside. The 'foreign help' so far extended has only served to create confusion - the unconditional and blind rather partial news given by the Lutheran World Federation in the press and on the radio have only revealed the existing pressure and the Western propaganda. As to the value of this I have already expressed my opinion in my earlier letter. But I say now and this much that the prestige and popularity of the Lutheran World Federation has not gained by it - on the contrary."

## Joint Declaration by the Evangelical Alliances in the Northern Countries.

The Evangelical Alliances in Denmark, Norway and Sweden have sent the Evangelical Alliances in other countries attached to



the Evangelical Alliance of Europe a joint declaration in which they define their views on the tasks and position of the Alliance in religious life and also in relation to the official ecumenical organs.

In the declaration it says that the Evangelical Alliances of the three countries are independent of the ecumenical work in matters of organization, and that it is desired to continue the work along the old lines, independent of organizations of super-confessional nature. Furthermore it says:

"Where efforts are made by the ecumenical movement for preparing the way for closer fellowship with the Roman Catholics, the Alliance feels bound to exert the utmost caution and, like the original Evangelical Alliance, it is still on guard against any kind of religious oppression, for which reason - and also because of the religious persecutions in Spain and South America and of the more and more prevalent worship of the Virgin Mary - we feel ourselves in the deepest, and not in the least mitigated, opposition to the Roman Church, exactly as our fathers did."

Next, it is stressed that the growth of the ecumenical work in the churches and among the peoples of the Northern countries has made plain the purpose of the Alliance as an evangelical movement and at the same time forced it to adopt the same attitude as the first Evangelical Alliance. Its aim is to unite all evangelical Christians who work for a revival in their own people and to call all believers to united prayer. The Alliance, therefore, approves of the joint evangelical enterprises which seek to call people to repentance, and the Alliance itself wants to be a piece of evangelization work resting solely on a Biblical foundation. Finally, it is stated that it is desired to 'co-operate with people of the same mind in other countries and, in agreement with the Evangelical Alliance in Europe, to work for evangelical unity throughout the world along the old lines of the Alliance: for the gospel on the foundation of the Bible to call to repentance and revival at home and abroad'.

As may be remembered a disruption of the Evangelical Alliance took place in 1953 when the European branches of the movement did not feel able to join in the strongly fundamentalistic 'World's Evangelical Fellowship' which was established at the instance of the American 'National Association of Evangelicals', and instead formed the Evangelical Alliance of Europe. The English branch of the movement is affiliated to both the international organizations.

#### Northern Ecumenical Rally at Nyborg Strand in June.

The fourth Northern ecumenical rally will be held from June 26th-30th at Nyborg Strand in Denmark under the chairmanship of Professor K.E. Skydsgaard, Copenhagen. Like the previous ones this one is also arranged by the Northern Ecumenical Institute. The speakers will be from the various Northern countries and will deal with subjects like 'Man and the Powers', 'The Atom Age - Dusk or Dawn?', 'The Family in Danger?' and 'The Welfare State and the Responsibility of the Individual'. The Bible studies will be conducted by two Finnish professors and a Danish bishop and there will also be a number of round-table talks on topical ecumenical questions.





### Northern Professors Discuss the Aims of the University.

At the invitation of the Student Christian Movement and the Sigtuna Foundation in Sweden 30-40 professors from the Northern countries were gathered for a three-day conference around April 1st on the subject of the aims of the university, led by the Director of the Foundation, Olov Hartman. As representative of the World's Student Christian Federation Professor J. Edward Dirks, Yale, USA, spoke on the subject 'The Part Played by the University in the World of To-Day'. Of other subjects which were heatedly debated after an opening lecture on the subject may be mentioned 'The University Ideal of Education' and 'The University and the Expectations of Society'.

### Orthodox-Lutheran-Anglican Conference in Denmark.

The Danish and the Swedish sections of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius which works for a greater understanding and fellowship between the Orthodox, the Lutheran and the Anglican Churches, will arrange a conference at Liselund, near Slagelse, Denmark, from June 22nd-26th with Rev. Svend Borregaard in the Chair. A number of professors of divinity and other churchmen from the three denominations in different countries will address the conference and open the discussions, among them Professor K.E. Skydsgaard, Copenhagen, the Orthodox Professors L. Zander and N. Zernov, and Rev. A.M. Allchin, London. At the conference prayers at the canonical hours will be read, and morning services or high masses will be conducted according to the Danish Lutheran, the Orthodox and the Anglican rites.

## DENMARK

### Warnings Against the Consequences of the European Joint Market.

The possibility of Denmark's joining the so-called 'European Joint Market' is being lively discussed during these months and endeavours are made to visualize the possible consequences of such a step both with regard to financial matters and also in other spheres. Certain quarters in the Lutheran National Church warn against such plans as it is feared they may result in a strong Roman Catholic activity and infiltration in the country.

Thus the vicar of Grejs, Rev. Th. Kragh, at a meeting last month stated that within the boundaries of the European Joint Market it is allowed to buy and utilize land and to establish societies anywhere in the territories of the membership countries, and that this might mean, if the occasion should arise, that Roman Catholic vested interests might take over Danish publishing firms, theatres and cinemas without any possible legal objection.

The former Danish Minister of Church Affairs, Dean Carl Hermansen, in an article in 'Dansk Kirketidende' likewise warns against the consequences of joining the Market. He calls the Joint Market 'the Great Roman Catholic Union' and feels that, in case Denmark should join in, she will find herself in quite unfamiliar company which adheres to a mode of life that is as far removed as possible





from the Danish and Northern way of thinking. He points out that the Church of Rome has never dissociated itself from the persecutions of Protestants in Spain and, consequently, must approve of employing the weapons of power in a spiritual struggle. Neither has the Roman Church ever deplored the heretics' piles, Dean Carl Hermansen continues, and he concludes from this that the legitimacy of deaths at the stake is still maintained in principle.

The former Minister of Church Affairs mentions the case against the Italian bishop who was sentenced for having described a couple married before the registrar as not being properly married. This case, he feels, shows the true face of the Roman Church. 'It is a church which wants to rule and not a church which is ready to serve and therefore it is guilty of so glaring a fault that it has placed itself beyond any fellowship with other denominations. It is a domineering and imperious church to which we open our doors the very moment we become a member of the Joint Market of the six countries'.

#### Danish Pastor on Long Study Visit to the Soviet Union?

In the autumn the 28 years old minister at the Cathedral of Copenhagen, Rev. Arne Bugge, hopes to begin a 4 1/2 months' visit for study purposes to the Soviet Union. The University of Copenhagen has granted the necessary funds and in a letter to Bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard the Metropolitan Nicolai of Moscow has stated his willingness to be of assistance to Rev. A. Bugge. The purpose of the visit is to study medieval liturgic manuscripts and to investigate the influence of Byzantine culture on medieval Russia.

#### Undergraduates Express Wish for Special Student Pastors.

The Joint Council of Danish Undergraduates which is the common organ for the students' councils at the institutions of higher education and of no specifically Christian character, has approached the bishops of Copenhagen and Århus with the request that special student pastors be appointed in each of the two cities.

Until now only one of the professors of theology in each place has conducted regular services in one of the city's churches, but now the students want specially appointed clergymen who should have the students as their particular congregations. Amongst other things, reference is made to the student pastor in Stockholm who has been of great help to the undergraduates. The bishops will now consider the matter together with the Minister of Church Affairs. The question may probably be solved in connection with the Bill for a new establishment of diocesan chaplains which is expected to be passed by Parliament in the near future.



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The former Minister of Church Affairs, the late, against the Lutheran bishop who was elected to the position of bishop of the diocese of Copenhagen and registered as an active member of the Church. It is a case, he feels, shows the true face of the Roman Church. It is a church which wants to rule and has a number of people in power and therefore it is guilty of an extreme selfishness. It has placed itself beyond any fellowship with other denominations. It is a dominating and imperious church, to which we must not accord the very moment we become a member of the Joint Council of the six countries.

Danish Pastor on Joint Study Visit to the Soviet Union

In the autumn the 28 years old minister at the cathedral of Copenhagen, Rev. Arne Borge, hopes to begin a study visit for study purposes to the Soviet Union. The University of Copenhagen has granted the necessary funds and in a letter to Bishop A. Holman, Borge has expressed his willingness to accept assistance from the University of Copenhagen. The purpose of the visit is to study modern medicine and to investigate the influence of hygienic culture on general health.

Undersecretary Expresses Wish for Specialized Ministry

The Joint Council of Danish Churches, which is the common organ for the Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist and other churches, has expressed its opinion on the proposed specialization of the Ministry of Church Affairs. The Council is of the opinion that the Ministry of Church Affairs should be specialized in order to deal with the various matters.

Until now only one of the professors of theology in Copenhagen has conducted regular services in one of the city's churches, but now the students want specially appointed chaplains. Among other things, reference is made to the student houses in Copenhagen where there has been of great help to the students. The bishop will now consider the matter together with the Minister of Church Affairs. The question may probably be solved in connection with the bill for a new establishment of diocesan chaplains which is expected to be passed by Parliament in the near future.



## FINLAND

### Differing Opinions in Finland on the Decision of the Ghana Conference.

The Finnish Missionary Council is divided on the decision of the Ghana conference in January about the integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. So far there is no indication of the consequences which may result from this situation.

Already before the conference in Ghana the Missionary Council had intimated that several of its member organizations, among them the Pentecostal Foreign Mission Society, were against the integration, partly as a pure matter of principle since they are negatively inclined towards the World Council of Churches, partly because they are afraid that an integration may lead to a disruption on certain mission fields as well as of the present very close collaboration between the Northern missionary societies. The members connected with the Lutheran National and the Methodist Churches, as well as organizations of an ecumenical nature, such as for instance the YWCA, on the other hand, are positively inclined towards a possible integration.

### Preparing for the Church Convocation in the Autumn.

At the middle of this month a number of important matters to be dealt with at the Church Convocation in the autumn have been discussed in preparation for the Convocation at meetings in all the different dioceses. The delegates to the Convocation which will begin on October 1st and probably last for six weeks, have already been nominated and it turns out that of the 127 delegates only 9 are women. This has caused considerable attention, in as much as the Convocation is to consider, amongst other things, a proposal for the establishment of a special office for women.

The majority in the Committee which has drawn up the proposal for such an office are in favour of entitling women to administer the sacraments in very special cases only. One member of the Committee, however, Miss Merri Ahla, M.A., advocates that women should have equal rights with men to take holy orders. In her reservation it says, amongst other things: "The slow social development and die-hard social prejudices are the only real obstacles in the way of women pastors. Therefore, when deliberating this matter one must be very careful not to let human prejudices dictate the decision in a question where the will of God should be honestly sought for."

### The Ecumenical Work Expands.

During the last years the ecumenical work in Finland has been expanding, it says in a statement by Seppo A. Teinonen, Secretary General of the Ecumenical Council in Finland. A contributory factor to this increase is the fact that inter-denominational collaboration in general all over the world has been making progress, but it is also due to the fact that the ecumenical way of thinking is beginning to spread in Finland. The Ecumenical Council has made a special point of exchanging ecumenical news with other countries, has financed the participation of many Finns in ecumenical conferences and study tours

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abroad, and has also taken collections for ecumenical purposes. The Ecumenical Institute belonging to the World Council of Churches (Bossey) will conduct a special ecumenical conference at the Finnish Laymen's Institute at Järvenpää.

#### Church Taxation to be Re-Organized.

At the request of the Government the Finnish President has introduced a Bill in Parliament dealing with a re-organization of church taxation. The Bill suggests that church taxes for members of the Lutheran and the Orthodox Churches should be collected together with the civil taxes. In order to cover the expenses thus incurred by the public the Lutheran National Church should pay 6% of the amount while the Orthodox Church which is worse off financially will be exempted from this.

This arrangement can only come into force after financially combining congregations in places where there are more than one congregation belonging to the same church in one municipality.

#### Sport Services at the World Championships in Lahti.

It has gradually become a tradition that the Lutheran congregations in Lahti arrange special services for sportsmen in connection with the world championships in ski-ing and ski-jumping. This was also the case at the championship contests last month. The Sunday service which was transmitted over the radio had to be arranged as an early service, however, instead of at the usual hour at 10 o'clock on account of the contests - something which caused some annoyance in church quarters. At this service Bishop Elis Gulin preached. Other preachers at the sport services were Dean Väinö Hovila and Dr. Y. Sakai from Japan.

#### Orthodox Seminary to be Erected in Porkkala.

The ecumenical work camp beginning on July 4th in Kyrkslätt in the Porkkala district which was returned by the Soviet Union will clear the site for a seminary for the Orthodox Church. The work camp is also to construct a road, build a sports field, and prepare the grounds for the erection of a youth camp.

#### "The House of Unlimited Connections".

For the past six years the Central Foundation of the Settlement Movement in Finland has been running an international folk high school of a special nature in the vicinity of Hämeenlinna (Tavastehus). The name of the folk high school is 'Viittakivi', i.e. 'the house of unlimited connections'. Here people from different social circles, occupations, peoples and cultures are invited to discuss the problems arising from the conflicts between our ideals and reality.

#### Orthodox Delegation on Visit to Moscow.

Headed by the Bishop Paul a delegation from the Finnish Orthodox Church will leave for Moscow at the beginning of May at the invitation of the Patriarch Alexius in order to take part in the religious celebrations from May 10th-20th in connection with the 40-years anniversary of the re-establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate in 191

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### The Importance of the Church in the Life of the Community.

It is the great responsibility of the church to counteract in words and deeds the overrating of material values and to open the eyes of people to the more or less forgotten ideal values of life, it was stated by the well-known Finnish lawyer, the former rector of the Turku (Åbo) Academy, Dr. L.-E. Taxell, in a recent lecture in Vaasa (Vasa). Dr. Taxell continued:

"In opposition to the one-sided emphasis of our time on group interests the church has occasion to stress the value of the individual as a human being, but at the same time the church should emphasize the duties and the responsibility of man as a member of the community. The thought that man has essential duties towards a power over and above him is a factor which, if allowed to express itself in daily life, may give man the correct perspective of himself and of the society which he is meant to serve. In this connection justice also obtains importance as something of universal validity, far above the conflicts and contrasts of daily happenings. The voice of the church should be heard not only as a protest against standards which set aside justice, but also when new laws are to be drawn up which affect such aspects of human life as are connected with the teachings of the church."

### ICELAND

#### New Book by Dr. Fridrik Fridriksson.

The internationally well-known 90-years old Icelandic minister and YMCA leader, Dr. Fridrik Fridriksson, recently published a new book called "Icelandic Saga in a Nutshell". The book contains 114 anthems which are evidence of the faith and still unimpaired spiritual strength of the old author.

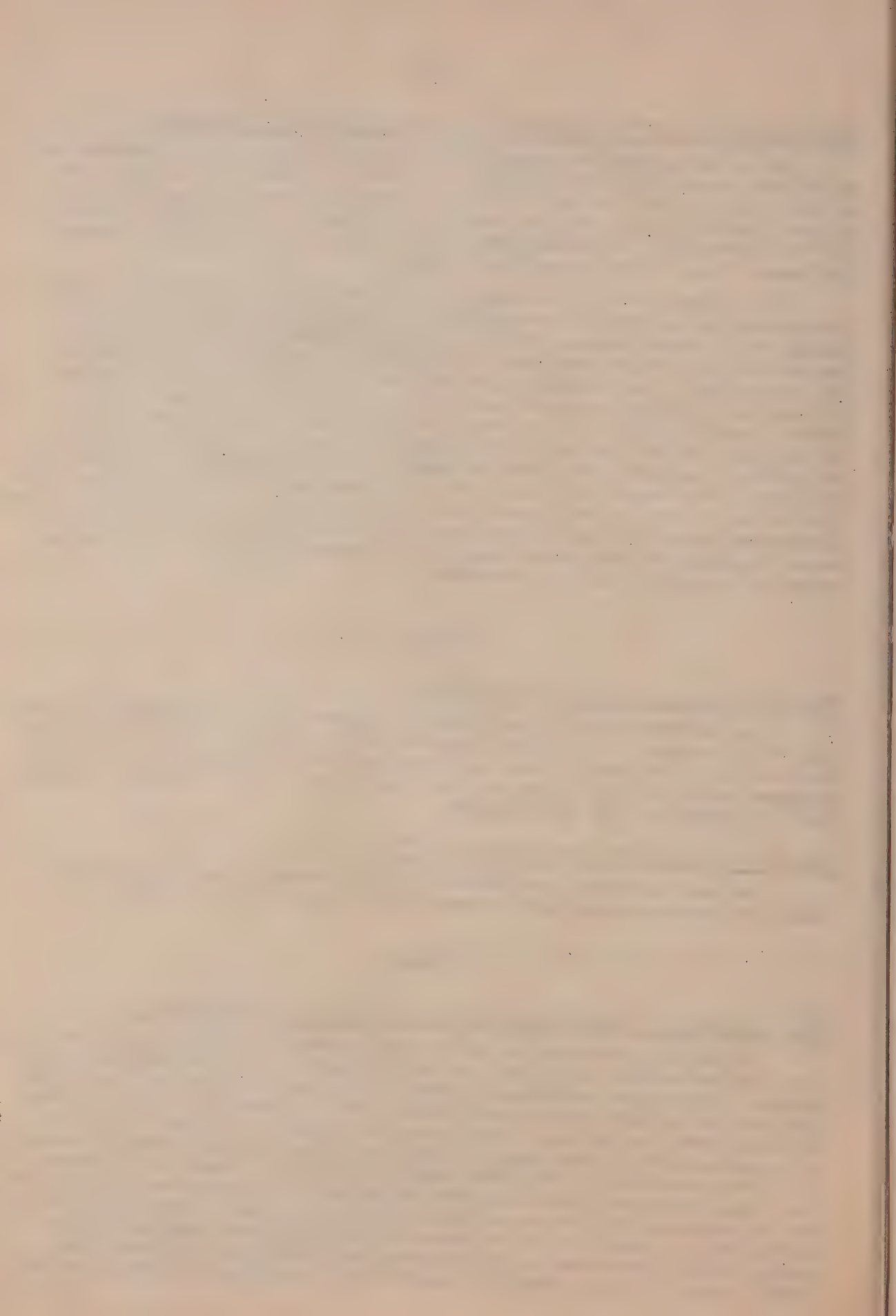
#### Skálholt Cathedral Completed in 1959?

The new cathedral at Skálholt will probably be completed in time for consecration some time during the summer of 1959.

### NORWAY

#### The Connection Between Church and School to be Weakened?

It has caused wide attention and discussion in Norway that the now published Education Bill to be introduced in Parliament by the Social Democratic Government tends to weaken the present intimate connection between church and school at a number of points. It was known already in advance that clergymen were no longer to be ex-officio members of the school administration in the various municipalities (see CN No. 36). But now it turns out that, furthermore, the congregational councils are no longer to have a say in the matter of introducing new text books for use in the instruction in Christianity, that the rule about each school day beginning and ending with a hymn and a prayer has been omitted, and that the legal right of the bishop to supervise the subject of religion in





the schools has been replaced by a provision that 'he is entitled to listen to the instruction in Christianity' and 'to give advice' if the school authorities should ask for it.

The greatest stir, however, has been created by the fact that the present provision in the Education Act concerning the aim of religious instruction in which it says, amongst other things, that instruction should be given 'in the Christian Faith according to the Evangelical-Lutheran Confession', has been completely left out in the Bill.

Church circles fear that the omission of this provision may clear the road for a general instruction in Christianity or a 'neutral' religious instruction so that the Lutheran National Church may no longer regard the instruction in Christianity in the schools as the baptismal teaching of the Church. The Christian daily in Oslo "Vårt Land" points out that a generation ago the Social Democratic Party included in its programme the abolition of instruction in Christianity and writes that "a change in the foundation of the subject into something of a general Christian nature, if not into something of a general religious or undefined nature, is not far from being just as fatal in the eyes of the Church as a veritable abolition".

It is evident that the Government's Education Bill will meet with very strong opposition concerning the above mentioned amendments. The leader of the "Instituttet for Kristen Oppsøeding" (Institute for Christian Upbringing), Bjarne Hareide, in a statement to the press appeals for opposition to the Bill and Secretary General Tormod Vågen suggests a plebiscite about the matter as he feels convinced that a majority will go against the Bill.

"Vårt Land" feels that if the Bill, contrary to expectation, should be passed the consequence must be that Church and State part ways in as much as the presupposition for the arrangement with a National Church must be a religious instruction in the schools which is faithful to the Confession.

#### Preparations for the Solemn Blessing of King Olav in the Cathedral of Nidaros.

The Solemn Blessing of the Norwegian King in the ancient sanctuary of Nidaros Cathedral on Sunday June 22nd (see CN No. 33) will be a simple and dignified ceremony. Only a few guests will be officially invited, viz. the three Presidents of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education and Church Affairs, the High Court Presiding Judge, the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, and the Head of the Church Section of the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs.

Dissatisfaction with this modest representation has been expressed from several sides and it is pointed out that although the Blessing is to be a simple and dignified function "the setting must be in proper relation to the event or dignity will suffer" as it says in the Christian daily in Oslo "Vårt Land". The Bishop of Trondheim, Arne Fjellbu, has privately invited all Members of Parliament so that they may attend the function without being officially invited.

At the Solemn Blessing in Nidaros Cathedral, taking the place of a coronation which is no longer constitutional, the Bishops Johs. Smem and Arne Fjellbu will lead the service according to a special ritual





to be drawn up by the Ministry of Church Affairs.

The ceremony will be filmed, both in colours and in black-and-white. The latter edition will be shown in television in a number of countries.

#### Ecumenical Forum to be Re-Organized.

"Ekumenisk Krets" (Ecumenical Circle), the unofficial common forum of the Lutheran National Church and the Free Churches, has been re-organized. 45 representatives of the National Church have been nominated and the Free Churches affiliated to the Joint Council of Evangelical Communities are to elect a similar number.

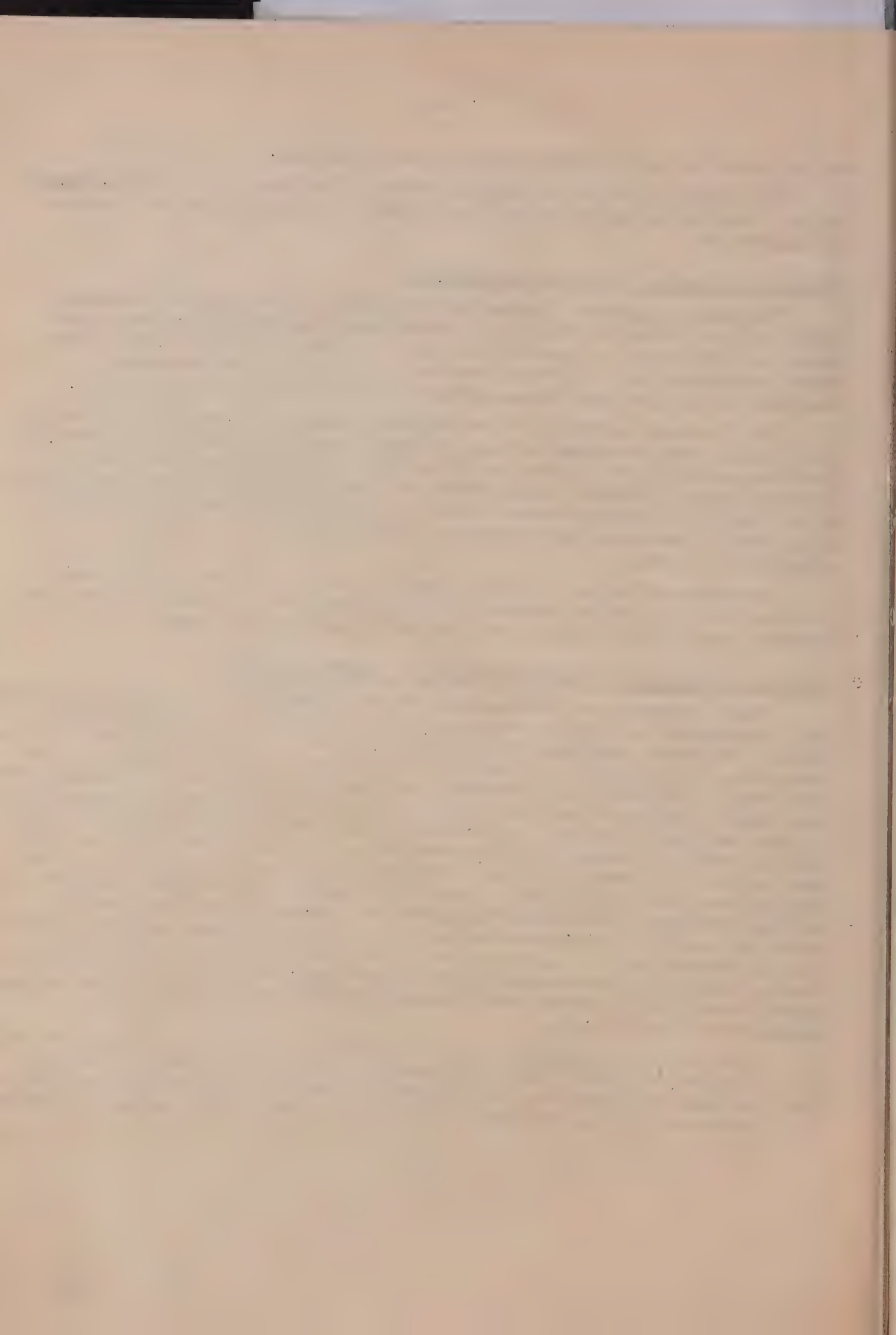
At a recent meeting at which the Chairman, Rev. Alex Johnson, told about the re-organization, various obvious spheres of activity for "Ekumenisk Krets" were outlined and it was emphasized that a brotherly and informal discussion of local ecumenical matters should be adopted to a wider extent than hitherto. The new Education Bill (see above) was also mentioned as a subject for discussion in this ecumenical forum.

"Ekumenisk Krets" is in no way dependent on the World Council of Churches for which reason circles which are critically inclined towards the Council may also join actively in this work.

#### Another Successful "Easter Festival Week" in Oslo.

While hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Oslo left for the mountains, according to tradition, in order to celebrate the Easter holidays, another religious "Easter Festival Week" was arranged for those left behind in the Capital as well as for tourists. The Week was introduced by a concert in the Cathedral on Palm Sunday and throughout the Week musical and other devotional services were held in the various churches in Oslo. On the Wednesday a number of sight-seeing tours of religious interest were launched. Maundy Thursday and Easter eve Freda Collin's "Redemption" was performed, on Good Friday the Salvation Army conducted a music and Passion service, and in the Cathedral Handel's "Messiah" was sung. The climax was an open air service on Easter morning in Torshovparken, and the Festival concluded with a meeting for young people on the evening of Easter Monday in Stortorvet (the town square). During the Festival Week two of the cinemas gave Passion shows and various other arrangements were also given.

All over the country there were hundreds of special Easter services and devotional events in tourist hotels and similar places for the many visitors in the mountains. At these services not only the ministers in the vicinity, but also a number of laymen, preached





## SWEDEN

### Church Convocation on August 30th About Women Pastors.

The Swedish Government has convened the Church Convocation which is the supreme representation of the Lutheran National Church to a new session on August 30th at which, amongst other things, decision is to be taken about the Bill passed by Parliament about the access of women to take holy orders (see CN No. 36). At the Church Convocation last autumn a similar Bill was rejected with 62 votes against 36. The Convocation has the right of veto with regard to Bills passed by Parliament concerning church affairs, but so far no Convocation has ever made use of this right. The outcome of the Convocation this year is, therefore, being watched with the keenest interest.

The Upper House of Parliament passed the Bill without division after a short debate. In the Lower House 166 Members voted for the Bill while 39 wanted the question postponed until 1959 in order to give the Church time for further deliberations: 4 refrained from voting, and 21 Members were absent. During the debate the Minister of Church Affairs, Mr. Edenman, stressed the point that to the Government it is a matter of carrying out the principle of equal rights for men and women.

From June 2nd-4th an extraordinary Bishop's Conference will be held at which the matter will be discussed.

### Resignations of the Archbishop and the Bishop of Lund.

Archbishop Dr. Yngve Brilioth has sent in his resignation as from October 1st this year as he has reached the age of 67 years and Bishop Dr. Anders Nygren, Lund, has likewise sent in his resignation from the same date. Already for some time past there has been a lively discussion going on in the press about their possible successors and the interest is especially great as to who is to be Sweden's new archbishop. The episcopal election in Lund will take place on May 13th and that in Uppsala on May 28th.

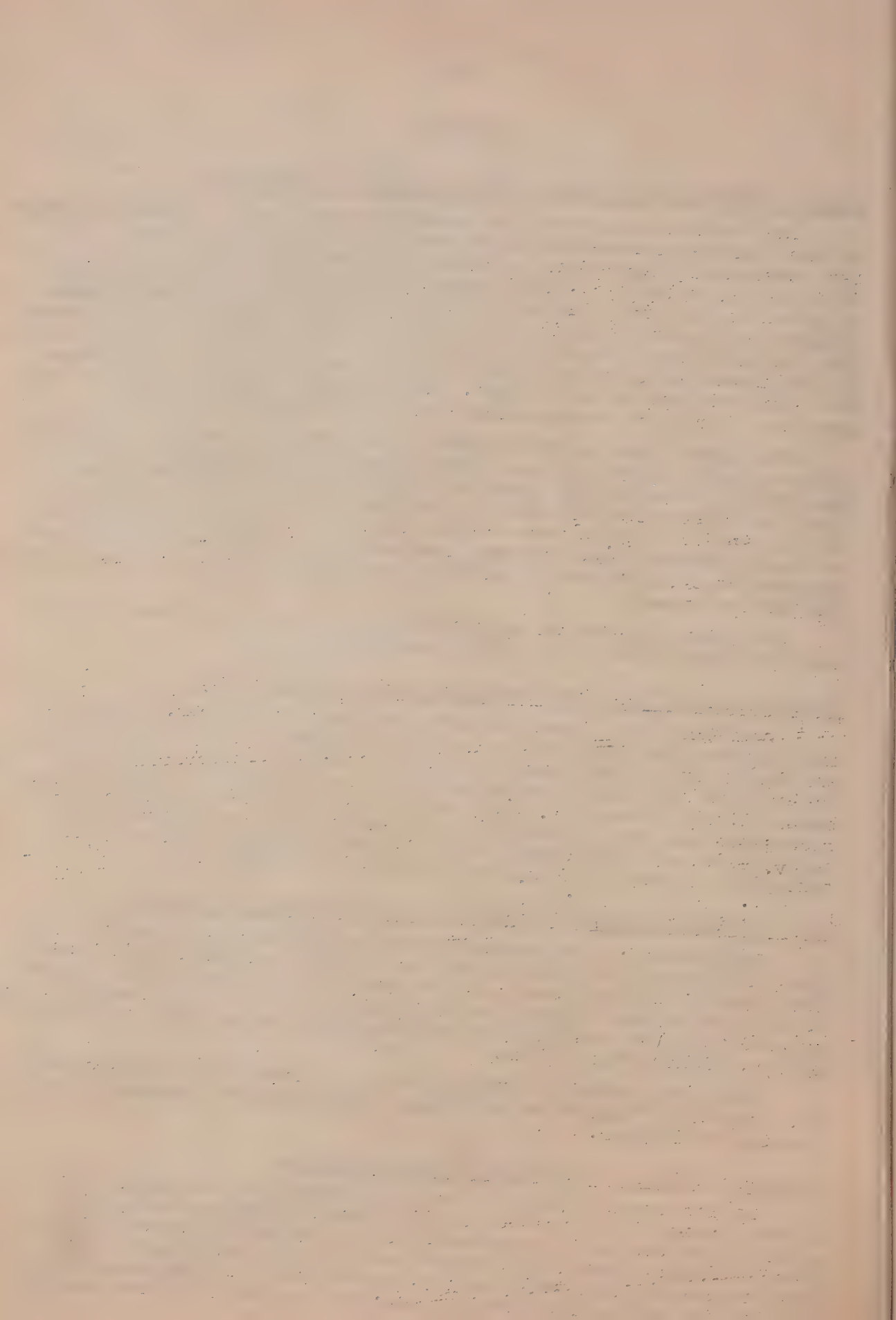
### Lewi Pethrus Resigns as Leader of the Pentecostal Mission.

The pastor of the Philadelphia Congregation in Stockholm and thus the leading personality of the Pentecostal Mission in Sweden for almost 50 years, Rev. Lewi Pethrus, will resign in the autumn on account of age. He will be succeeded as Head of the largest congregation in the country, the Philadelphia Congregation in Stockholm, by Rev. Willis Säwe, Malmö.

Rev. Lewi Pethrus continues as the editor of the Pentecostal Mission daily "Dagen" and of IBRA, the Pentecostal Mission's radio station in Tangier.

### Historic Episcopal Election in South Africa.

At its synod in May the Lutheran Church in Zululand, South Africa, which is a fruit of Swedish foreign mission work, will elect a new bishop in succession to the recently deceased Bishop Erik Sundgren. There are indications that the new bishop could be a coloured which would mean a turning point in the annals of the Mission and a demonstration against the South African racial





policy. So far only white men have been eligible to the episcopate, but the Swedish Mission Board has postponed the election until this provision could be altered.

The news has been received with satisfaction in Sweden, and now the decision of the Mission Church itself as to the wisdom of electing a coloured man in the present circumstances is being eagerly awaited. The Mission Board which must confirm the election will have no objection to such a choice.

Should a coloured man be chosen as Head of the Church he would no doubt have to have a white man at his side who could be recognized as the representative of the Church by the South African Government which would not be likely to negotiate with a coloured bishop.

#### Resignation from the National Church May Now Be Done in Writing.

The Swedish Parliament has passed an Amendment to the Act of Religious Freedom concerning resignation from the Lutheran National Church. Up to now the rule has been that one should personally approach the clergyman in one's parish about the matter, but in future a written statement, signed by two witnesses, would be sufficient.

The Amendment was passed by the Upper House with 75 votes against 47 and in the Lower House with 116 votes against 79. Some of those voting against the Amendment motivated their attitude by stating that the decision of the Church Assembly in the autumn concerning women pastors - no matter what the result is - might result in an unconsidered mass resignation from the National Church in case such a resignation was made too easy. Free Church quarters have greeted the Amendment with satisfaction as it had just been decided at the Free Church Assembly in March to advocate a simplification of the procedure.

The Amendment will be put before the Church Convocation in August for approval or rejection.

#### Debate on Spiritual Cure of Souls.

A Parliamentary Bill concerning the spiritual cure of souls in hospitals which, on the whole, would mean a firmer organization of the work of the Swedish National Church in this sphere, has been met with a counter proposal by the Free Churches. All the Free Church Members of Parliament are in favour of establishing special positions as hospital chaplains which may be applied for by all clergymen regardless of to which denomination they belong.

#### Church Communities to Have Each Their Own Week in the Radio.

A couple of times the Swedish Broadcast Corporation has given a certain church community permission to arrange all the religious programmes during one week in order thus to give them a more general presentation. This has been the case with regard to the Lutheran National Church and the Mission Covenant Church. During the last week of March the microphone was in the same way entrusted to the Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen (Evangelical National Missionary Society) which works independently, but in connection with the National Church.



policy. So far only white men have been eligible for the episcopate, but the Swedish Mission Board has postponed this decision until this provision could be altered.

The news has been received with satisfaction in Sweden, and the decision of the Mission Church itself as to the admission of colored men in the present circumstances is being awaited. The Mission Board which was consulted in this matter will have no objection to such a change.

Should a colored man be chosen as head of the Church he would no doubt have to have a white man as his aide and could be recognized as the representative of the Church by the South African Government which would not be likely to negotiate with a colored bishop.

Restoration from the National Church May Now Be Possible.

The Swedish Parliament has passed an amendment to the Act of Religious Freedom concerning restoration from the Lutheran National Church. Up to now the rule has been that one should personally appear the clergyman in one's parish about this matter, but in future a written statement, signed by two witnesses, would be sufficient.

The Amendment was passed by the Upper House with 75 votes against 47 and in the Lower House with 115 votes against 79. Some of those voting against the Amendment motivated their attitude by stating that the decision of the Church Assembly in the recent controversy over women pastors - no matter what the result is - might result in an unconsidered mass resignation from the National Church in case such a resignation was made too easy. Other Church leaders have stated the Amendment with satisfaction as it had just been decided at the Free Church Assembly in March to advocate a simplification of the procedure.

The Amendment will be put before the Church Convention in April for approval or rejection.

Debate on Spiritual Cure at Gothenburg.

A Parliamentary Bill concerning the spiritual cure of souls is hostile which, on the whole, would mean a firm organization of the work of the Swedish National Church in this sphere, has been met with a counter proposal by the Free Churches. All the Free Church Members of Parliament are in favour of establishing special positions as hospital chaplains which may be applied for by all persons regardless of to which denomination they belong.

Church Committees to Have Their Own Week in the Radio.

A couple of times the Swedish Broadcast Corporation has given a certain church community permission to arrange all the religious programmes during one week in order thus to give them a more general presentation. This has been the case with regard to the Lutheran National Church and the Mission Government Church. During the last week of March the microphone was in the same way entrusted to the Evangeliska Föreläsningssällskapet (Evangelical National Missionary Society) which works independently but in connection with the National Church.



### News in Brief:

- While Sweden does not officially take part in the Bruxelles Exhibition the Mission Covenant Church will show glimpses of its work in the Kongo in the Mission Section.
- The day and night service of the clergymen in Stockholm has proved to be a success. Every night there are many calls. A similar service has been established in Borås with 5 clergymen from the National Church and 7 from the Free Churches on duty.
- In the Diocese of Växjö the most extensive church campaign up to now is being planned for next autumn. It will last for a week and be held under the motto "Reckon with God!".
- The semi-official organ of the Swedish Lutheran National Church, the weekly "Vår Kyrka" was chosen among 160 periodicals as one of the best of those entered for the exhibition "The Design of the Swedish Periodicals 1954-1956".

### Northern Christian Conference.

A number of religious organisations from the North are planning to meet for joint Northern conferences and prayer. One of the "Church Movements" (one organisation working for the promotion of free churches, especially in the big cities) will meet in Stockholm from June 2nd - 5th. Amongst other things, the relations will be discussed between the Church and the State and the special situation of the Church in the Northern world, which all have National Churches, as well as the influence and equipment of the interior of a church. In connection with the conference there will be an exhibition of models and drawings for new churches to be erected.

The Northern associations of workers of religions will meet at Siguna, Sweden, from July 2nd - 5th. These meetings take place every fifth year and this year the main subject will be "The Child and the Message". Lectures and sessions at the conference will belong to different denominations.

At the next inter-denominational conference will be held at Engholm which began the summer course on the last the so-called "Engholm (Wittenburg) Conference" will hold a conference from August 15th - 19th at which a number of typical subjects will be dealt with under the main heading of "The Northern Countries and Europe". The

